

15
Righteousness Rained from Heaven,

O R

A Serious and Seasonable DISCOURSE Exciting all to an earnest enquiry after, and continued waiting for the effusions of the Spirit, unto a communication and increase of Righteousness: That Faith, Holiness and Obedience may yet abound among us, and the Wilderness become a fruitful field,

As it was Delivered in a

S E R M O N

*Preached at Harford on Connecticut in
New-England, May 10.*

1677.

*Being the Day of
ELECTION there.*

By Mr. Samuel Hooker, Pastor of the Church of
Christ in Farmington.

Isai. 44. 3, 4. For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my spirit upon thy seed and my blessing upon thine off-spring. And they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water-courses.

Psal 80. 19. Turn us again O Lord God of Hosts, and cause thy face to shine and we shall be saved.

Lam. 5. 21. Turn us unto thee O Lord and we shall be turned, renew our days as of old.

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Christian Reader;

IT is an Observation certain and solemn, that Israels Holy one is now in a peculiar manner to bare witness against the wantonness and sins of his Covenant people, that have been singularly favoured and privileged by him, Amos 3. 2. You only have I known of all the Families of the Earth, therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities: The disobedient, regardless behaviour of his Sons and Daughters carrieth an excess of provocation, Deut. 32. 19. When the Lord saw it he abhorred them, because of the provoking of his Sons and of his Daughters: In what awful and tremendous manner the Lords anger hath been of late in special, made to appear against his wilderness people, is not soon or easily to be forgotten: such an Adversary (the work of the Heathen, Ezek. 7. 24. bruish men, and skilful to destroy, Ezek. 21. 31.) stirred up against us, the sword gone through the land, and thereby wasting and terror, desolation and death, carried up and down: how have the mighty fallen, blood and flames abounded unto a fearful consumption in the midst of the earth? The Inhabitants of so many Villages made to cease even in Israel, and some Candlesticks also removed out of their places. Alas for the vineyard that his own right hand hath planted, how hath he taken away the hedges thereof: at the Boar out of the wood should waste, and the wilde Beasts of the Forest devour it: we have been delivered to the Sword, Cupidity and Spoil: That the Lord is righteous in all his wayes, and holy in all his works, is a truth always to be acknowledged, however terribil he is in dispensations towards the sons of men. Sins more then enough have been found with us to deserve all our sufferings, that we see no more least a worse thing come to us is the duty incumbent, and earnestly now called for: however ready the Lord our God (whose compassions fail not) hath shewn himself, in wrath to remember mercy, and repent him of the evil, yet will our impiency (if still continued) without fail make him weary of repenting: Sin not forsaken, we may expect, will be followed with a renewal and increase of judgement, for all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand stretched out still, for the people in whom he hath sinned, that smiteth them, &c. Ijai. 9. 12, 13. He hath further, sorer punishments to inflict on a people, that by a progress in sin carry on the provocation, Lev 26. 16. &c. for certain our sufferings will be greatned if our sins be not lessened, the former will rise unless the latter fall: nor will any thing herein suffice, short of a thorough work.

To the Reader.

show will not nor is it meet they should be accepted without the infuse Spirit and life of conversion. It is laid to Judah's charge, as no little evil, that she turned not with her whole heart, but feignedly, Jer. 3. 10 when bears circumcision becomes generally wanting among a professing people, they may look for woe, Jer. 9. 23, 26. And yet nothing less than an almighty power can perform the thing that is needful for us herein: means have not been wanting (what could have been done more) word and work, Law and Gospel, Mercies and Judgements abundantly improved, to how little purpose and prevalency, with many, very many, the observing eye may lawfully discover: our help and hope is in heaven; heart-funging thither for his salvation is eminently the work before us: and therein So'omons great request in behalf of the congregation of Israel is exceedingly suited to our condition, 1 King. 8. 57, 58: The Lord our God be with us, as he was with our Fathers, let him not leave us nor forsake us, that he may incline our hearts unto him, to walk in all his wayes, and to keep his commandments and his statutes, and his judgements which he commanded our Fathers: protection all would have but conversion we must want, may this be New-Englands mercy we shall live: the heart-inclining presence of the God of our Fathers granted and continued to us: his Spirit poured out on the seed of his people, and his blessing upon their offspring, that as we are (through grace) the seed of the blessed of the Lord, we may also be a seed which the Lord hath blessed; This is of all the mercies we want, the most needful mighty and desirable, and accordingly with utmost care, fear and faithfulness to be groaned after and waited for.

To awaken, excite and encourage to this so necessary a work, is the designe of the Treatise following: the solemnity of the truth it self therein insisted on, our concernment in it, with its peculiar seasonableness give it abundant commendation. The judicious Author was by a compassionate hand towards us, pointed to this Subject, and with an eminent assistance (some circumstances attending him, in special considered) carried out in the handling of it, to the great satisfaction of them that heard him. That it may be not acceptable only but sanctified and made effectually successful to the attainment of the end therein aimed at, by a blessing from heaven, powerfully accompanying it to the minds and hearts of them that read it (as it is here, after some considerable throws of difficulty, delivered to a more publick view) is the hearts desire and prayer of him, who is

Thine sincerely in our blessed Saviour,

John Whiting.

HOSEA 10. 12.

*For it is time to seek Fehovah until he come
and rain righteousness upon you.*



N the Words foregoing, the Prophet giveth *Israel* a discovery of the uncomfortable tearms on which they stood at this time with God: they had been disobedient, and unadutiful in their behaviour, as appeareth in the 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5th verses he was grieved and angry with them, as in the tenth [*It is in my heart to chastise them.*]

The way by which he was minded to do this was the Inrode of the Heathen [*Anath's People shall be gathered against them.*] The God of *Israel* is the Lord of Hosts. He doth according to his will in the Army of Heaven, and among the Inhabitants of the Earth. He bissetteth for the flies that is in the utmost parts of the Rivers of Egypt, and for the Bee that is in the land of *Assyria*, and maketh them to rest in the place where he appointeth, *Isa. 7. 18, 19.* it became *Israel* therefore when they saw the Nations gathering against them, to eye God who in his anger had mustered and given them a charge so to do. The *Assyrian* is the rod of his anger, and the staffe in their hand is his indignation, they move not till he sendeth, they make no spoile until he giveth the word of command, *2 King. 24. 2, 3.* And the Lord sent against him bands of the Caldees, and bands of the Syrians, and bands of the Moabites, and bands of the children of Ammon, and sent them against *Judah* to destroy it. Surely at the commandment of the Lord came this upon *Judah*.

The Prophet addeth [*When they shall binde them in their two furrows*] here Interpreters are variously minded: some take the words to signifie the ground, and some, the event of the ensuing War; those that incline to the former, conceive the Prophet to compare the people to untamed Bulls, impatient of the yoke, and disused to plow, that will not keep the furrow, but turn, now on the right hand, and then on the left; so this people, instead of going right forward in the way of truth, which is but one halted betwixt two, balked in their obedience, and perverted their way: their heart was divided, as in the second verse of this chapter, they were crooked in their doings, and fixed in their frowardness, therefore God was purposed to chastise them. *vide Zanco. in locum.*

Others carry the words to denote the issue of the War, which was like to be sad on *Israels* part; for though they did unite and binde themselves with utmost resolution, to abide in their trenches or furrows, for their own defence. yet all in vain, Gods counsel should stand, and the Heathen having a charge from him would certainly tread them down. So *Caivin*, Their Enemies prevailing against them, would enslave them to miserable bondage and slavery, making them drudge like Oxen at plough. So *Mercer*. But why will God do thus by his people? It is answered [*Ephraim is a Heifer that is taught, and loveth to tread out the Corn*] In those times they were wont to tread out the Corn with the trampling of beasts: and God had commanded concerning the ox, while improved in that service, that he should not be muzzled: this was pleasanter work then plowing: and this *Ephraim* was for, a cheap Religion pleased him. They were grown sensual, sluggish, remiss and wanton in their Profession, 1 *Kin.* 12 26, 27, 28. *Jeroboam* said in his heart, now shall the kingdom return to the house of *David*, if this people go up to do sacrifice in the house of the Lord at *Jerusalem*: whereupon he took counsel and said unto them, It is too much for you to go up to *Jerusalem*, Behold thy Gods *O Israel*. If they might pick and chuse among Gods Precepts, take and leave as they listed, well and good: but to be at so much pains as a conversation commensurate to all Gods commands required they could not bear. Thus *Pharab* The Lord be so with you as I will let you go, *Exod.* 10. 10. I will order the matter, and let *Jehovah* comply and take up with what I shall see cause to appoint; But God resisteth the proud.

It

It followeth therefore [*But I passed over upon her fair neck,*] God had dealt bountifully with *Israel*, made him ride on the high places of the Earth, that he might eat the increase of the field, and he was grown fat, *Deut. 32. 13, 14.* but they abused his kindness, waxed proud and unruly, and would serve no further then would serve their own turn, making their own pleasure not Gods the rule of their obedience: wherefore God had already passed, over their neck, laid afflictions upon them, and had made their glory then, and the fatness of their flesh lean, if thereby they might have been tamed and reduced unto a thorough subjection to his will: but this did not do; wherefore he addeth [*I will make Ephraim toride*] inasmuch as lesser chastisements did not avail, God threateth to deal more roughly with them, with a stronger hand, violently to break in upon them, and send them into Captivity. So the word [*Ride*] sometimes importeth, *Job 39. 21, 22.* *With thy strong hand thou opposest thy self against me, thou liftest me up to the wind, thou causest me to ride, and dissolvest my substance.* Judah shall plough, and Jacob shall break his clods the rest who went not into captivity should see a great deal of hardship and abasement, though not so much as those that rode and were scattered among the nations.

Upon this in the 23rd verse, He exhorteth them unto reformation and amendment of their ways [*Some to your selves in righteousness*] that their reformation might be sound, and such as would hold, he counselleth to bottom it on repentance, [*Break up your fallow ground*] whatever men may pretend at present, or promise for the future, unless they repent, and sorrow after a godly sort for sin past, their reformation proveth like seed scattered on Land that never was broken up, which cometh to nothing in the issue.

[*Reap in mercy*] Though their Repentance and Reformation could merit nothing: yet if they would sow in righteousness, and break up their fallow ground. Mourn aright for sins past thorough the forbearance of God, and amend their doings: then they should reap a blessing and inherit prosperity, through the benignity and kindness of God: denoting that they must be beholding to mercy when they had done all they could; *Ephes. 2. 8.* By Grace ye are saved thorough Faith, and that not of your selves, it is the gift of God. So we are come to the Text.

For

For it is time to seek the Lord till he come and rain righteousness upon you. In which words the Prophet amplifieth on his former Exhortation, partly directing in it, and partly exhorting to it.

1. He directeth in it, *Seek ye Jehovah*; set not about this great work of Reformation in your own strength. Take God along with you, ingage him in it; your plowing and sowing will signify nothing unless he rain down a blessing on your endeavours.

2. He exciteh to it, and encourageth in it. It is true, that the way of man is not in himself, neither is it in him that walketh to direct his own steps. You can do nothing without him, but he can do all for you. Although judgement riseth not out of the dust nor doth righteousness spring out of the ground, yet he that rideth in his excellency on the sky can rain it down, *Isai. 45. 8. Drop down ye heavens from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness, let the Earth open, and let them bring forth salvation, and let righteousness spring up together, I the Lord create it.* He can by the power of his spirit mightily change; when that is poured out from on high, judgement shall dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness remain in the fruitful field, *Isai. 32. 15, 16.* Therefore in the lenie of our own nothingness, and believing Gods power and grace: it becometh us suitably to apply our selves unto him. So much for the scope of the words: More particularly for their meaning.

For it is time] The season calleth hard: If the Husband-man loseth his season, he loseth all, now is your opportunity; you are chastened but not destroyed, you have a breathing time yet left: two things seem to be implied in it. 1. Matter of encouragement, there was yet hope in *Israel* concerning this thing, in as much as God was willing to be intreated for their help, therefore let them be encouraged: it was not altogether too late. 2. Matter of awakening; It was high time to look about them, no allowance left for sloth or security: now is the acceptable time, now is the day of salvation; to day if ye will hear his voice barden not your hearts.

To seek Jehovah] Seeking is the use of meet endeavours to finde, *Mat. 7. 7. Ask and it shall be given you, seek and ye shall finde.* *Prov 8. 34, 35. Blessed is the man that heareth me, waiting at the post of my doors, for whose findeth me findeth life.* So that when the text saith, *it is time to seek the Lord*, the meaning is, that it is time

time to wait on God in the use of all fuitable means until he come] He is the most gloricus agent, none can do like God, He [*Performeth*] all things for me, *Psal. 57. 2.* you may speak fair, resolve and promise much, when under the dint of some signal providence, *Ier. 2. 20.* Thou saidst, I will not transgress, when upon every high hill, and under every green Tree, thou wanderest, playing the Harlot. Others may wish you well strive and labour for your betterment, and yet righteousness not be wrought, *Hos. 11. 7.* They called them to the most high, but none at all would exalt him: but if Jehovah come, he will make work with you, he will do the thing.

Kaine] This implieth, that in Jehovah our righteousness there dwelleth all fulness. He hath abundance of righteousness with him, and he can shed it forth upon us abundantly, *Tit. 2. 5, 6.* according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he shed on us abundantly, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Righteousness] This in Scripture Phrase signifieth variously, sometimes it is put for commutative justice, or strict, honest dealing, as opposed to goodness, *Rom. 7. 7.* scarcely for a righteous man will one die, peradventure, for a good man some would even dare to die: Sometimes it importeth conformity to the second Table, especially when joyed with, and yet distinguished from holiness, *Luk. 1. 75.* That we might serve him without fear in holiness and righteousness before him all the dayes of our life. Sometimes it is put more largely, and signifieth the same with Godliness, implying a heart and life evangelically conformable to Gods holy Law, *Luk. 1. 6.* and they were both righteous before God, walking in all the Commandments and Ordinances of the Lord blameless: Thus it familiarly passeth when put in opposition to wickedness, and iniquity, *Psal. 45. 7.* Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness, *Psal. 11. 5.* The Lord trieth the righteous, but the wicked his soul hateth. This sense seemeth to suit here, as opposed to wickedness and iniquity in the words immediately following, *ye have ploughed wickedness, ye have reaped iniquity*, ver. 13.

On you] The posterity of righteous *Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob*, the Lords portion, the lot of his inheritance, least you degenerate into the plant of a strange vine, and be laid waste at last.

The series therefore of the words runneth thus, you have sinned, and God hath afflicted you [*He hath passed over your neck*]; moreover you are still threatned [*It is in his desire to chastise you*]; But you are not destroyed; he hath not stirred up all his anger, you have yet a space to consider your selves and recover your strength: now therefore it is time to seek Jehovah; O that the Heavens would now drop down from above, and that the skies would pour down righteousness: that which you need, and without which the land is desolate, is the rain of Gods power. The effusion of his holy spirit, to accompany and influence word and ordinances, providences, mercies and afflictions unto righteousness. That you may be a repenting, reformed, religious, holy people. That is,

1. That you may cast out the love of all known sin, renounce confidence in your own righteousness and strength, and be righteous by faith, having the merits of Christs active and passive obedience imputed to you, by the efficacy of the infinite grace of God in the new covenant, *Rom. 4. 6. Phil. 3. 9.*

2. That you may be inherently righteous, putting off the old man which is corrupt, and put on the new, which is created after God in righteousness and true holiness, *Eph. 4. 24. that the very God of peace may sanctify you wholly, 1 Thess. 5. 23.*

3. That you may be practically righteous, denying all ungodliness and worldly lusts, living soberly, godly and righteously, in this present world; purging your selves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. These three go together, and in them consisteth the righteousness commanded to us in the Text.

The words thus opened afford us this Doctrinal Conclusion:

Doct. When a sinful People have been chastened, and are still threatned, but not destroyed, it is time for them to seek Jehovah till he come and rain righteousness upon them: that is, Till he by the efficacy of his almighty spirit make them a believing, sanctified, obedient People.

Zeph. 2. 2. 3. Before the decree bring forth, before the day pass as the chaff, before the fierce anger of the Lord come upon you

you, before the day of the Lords anger came upon you. Seek ye the Lord, seek righteousness, seek meekness: it may be you shall be hid in the day of the Lords anger. *Ephraim* at length found this to be good counsel, *Ier. 31. 18.* Thou hast chastised me and I was chastised, turn thou me and I shall be turned; Lord thou hast made me to know sorrow, to see and taste the bitterness of affliction; thou hast taken away my health, my peace, my pleasant things, O take away my sin too: make me to see and know that it is an evil and bitter thing that I have forsaken thee. Thus the Psalmist in behalf of the Church, when her shadow was departed, her hedges broken down, and the Boar out of the Forest laid her waste, *Psal. 80.* for this he beseeched the Lord thrice, with growing importunity and earnestness, like one in an agony,

Turn us again, O God, ver. 4.

Turn us again O God of Hosts, ver. 7.

Turn us again O Lord God of Hosts, ver. 19.

Daniel mentioneth it as matter of bitterness in the days of his solemn mourning, that they had failed in this, *Dan. 9. 19.* *All this evil is come upon us, yet made we not our Prayer before the Lord our God, that we might turn from our iniquities, and understand thy truth.* It is a lamentable thing, for a person or a people to be in great affliction, and yet make little of righteousness: This is that King *Ahasz,* *2 Chron. 28. 22.*

Reas. 1. May be taken from the great necessity and precious excellency of righteousness:

1. Its necessity: Righteousness is the one thing necessary. There is no living for us without it, *Prov. 10. 2.* Treasures of wickedness profit nothing, but righteousness delivereth from death. As *Iob* said, we may all say, *If I be wicked woe be to me,* *Job 10. 19.* for so saith God also, *Isai. 3. 10. 11.* Say to the righteous, that it shall be well, but woe unto the wicked. The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil, or cut off their remembrance from the earth: *Psal. 34. 15.* The wicked are men of sorrows and death, many sorrows shall be to the wicked. If therefore we be wicked, no wonder though Blasting and Mildew, sickness and Sword come upon us.

The worst of miseries belong to such, *Psal. 9. 17.* The wicked shall be turned to Hell, with all the Nations that forget God. And

it is not parts or parentage, or riches, or worldly bravery. It is not a form of godliness, a name to live, or external Ecclesiastical privileges that can deliver. Nothing but righteousness will do it. If we be godly in Christ Jesus; if we do righteousness and be righteous as he is righteous: this, this will stand us in stead in a dark day, *Isai. 38. 3, 4* Remember now O Lord, I beseech thee, that I have walked before thee in truth, and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight: on the other hand, what is the hope of the wicked? yet a little while and the wicked shall not be, thou shalt diligently consider his place and it shall not be, *Psal. 37. 10*. What a necessity doth this Text put upon Righteousness.

1. Be Righteous, or you will be nothing: yet a little while and the wicked shall not be. Such as take pleasure in unrighteousness drink in iniquity like water, are in their element when sinning, live, walk, and love to live in the commission of known sin, they are wicked, *2 Thess. 2. 12*. and such shall perish and consume away into smoke, *Psal. 37. 20*.

2. Thou shalt consider his place, and it shall not be. O the distaste with which the holy God is carried against the wicked. They are an abomination to him, his curse is in their house, *Prov. 3. 33*. the very place in which they live is cursed for their sake, and in danger to be desolate, *Psal. 107. 33*. When righteous Lot with his little company left Sodom, and few or none but wicked were left there, you know what followed, *Gen. 19. 24, 28*. Then the Lord rained upon Sodom and Gomorrah Brimstone and Fire from the Lord out of Heaven, and lo, the smoke of the Country went up as the smoke of a furnace. And if Jerusalem will not be instructed unto Righteousness, she may expect to be desolate, a land not inhabited, *Jer. 6. 8*.

3. A little time bringeth it to this; yet a little while and the wicked shall not be. The triumphing of the wicked is short, and the joy of the Hypocrite for a moment, *Job 20. 5, 6*. He shall flee away as a Dream, yet a little while, and the graceless, unbelieving sinner is damned, *Mark 16. 16*. Yet a little while and a people having a form of Godliness, but denying the power of it, will in likelihood come to nothing.

Moreover, Righteousness is an excellent thing, *Prov. 12. 26*. the righteous is more excellent than his neighbour. If God do persuade

wade you to embrace and receive Jesus Christ offered in the Gospel, to be your Lord and Saviour, *Job. 1. 12.* If your hearts be clein and mingled not with any known sin, *Mat. 5. 8.* If you chose the way of Gods precepts, and walk in his fear, you shall be a Treasure, *Exod. 19. 5.* The excellent in the Earth, *Psal. 16. 3.*

But if wicked, you are little worth, *Psal. 10. 20.* Chaff and dross in Gods account, and he will deal with you accordingly, *Psal. 1. 4.* The ungodly are not so: but are like the chaffe which the wind drieth away, *Psal. 119. 119.* Thou puttest away all the wicked of the Earth like dross, therefore I love thy testimonies. Yea the wicked are foolish and simple, vile, and loathsome, *Prov. 1. 22.* How long ye simple ones will ye love simplicity, and fools hate knowledge; The foolish shall not stand in thy sight, thou hatest all workers of iniquity, *Psal. 4. 5.* a wicked man is loathsome, and cometh to shame, *Prov. 13. 5.* It is well for the land when such are kept down. When the Righteous are in Authority the people rejoice, but when the wicked beareth rule, the people mourn, *Prov. 29. 2.* In a word our persons, our prayers, and all our works are by God much, or little set by, as we have or want righteousness, *Gen. 4. 4, 5.* God had respect unto Abel and unto his offering, but unto Cain and to his offering, God had no respect. The Author to the Hebrews rendereth the reason of this, *Heb. 11. 4.* Abel was righteous but Cain wicked. The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord, but: the prayer of the righteous is his delight.

In further demonstration of the excellency of Righteousness, look upon it in that one effect mentioned, *Isai. 32. 17:* And the work of Righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of Righteousness, quietness and assurance for ever: Great peace have they which love thy law, and nothing shall offend, *Psal. 119. 165:* Great peace, multiplied peace: (1) Peace with God: (2) Peace at home, in their own bosoms: (3) Peace with men.

1 Peace with God, *Rom. 5. 1:* Being justified by faith, we have peace with God: The righteous God loveth Righteousness, his countenance doth behold the upright, *Psal. 11. 7:* He and they are good friends; his secret is with the righteous, *Prov. 3. 32:* But there is no peace to the wicked, saith my God: *Isai. 57. 21:* He is far from them, *Prov. 15. 29:* and they may thank their own naughtiness for it; He is the very God of peace, but the ungodliness, and unrighteousness of men kindleth his wrath, *Rom. 1. 18:* They will...

will not meet him in the thing that is right: And truly if *Israel* will none of him, *Psal: 81: 11*: None of his wisdom to guide them, but lean to their own understandings: None of his Authority to rule them, but walk in the way of their own hearts: None of his goodness to satisfy them, but go to broken cisterns, change him for husks, carnal contentments: Slight his favour, despise his loving-kindness, forget him, put away the remembrance of him, say to him, depart from us, we desire not the knowledge of thy name, like not to retain him in their knowledge; hate the light, hold down the truth in unrighteousness; love pleasures more than God; are studious to be seen of men, but careless to be accepted of Jehovah; seek not his kingdom and righteousness, but worldly things and to suit their senses in the first place: do not love, fear and obey him as God, but in their hearts set up another as their chief good; rob him, break in upon his prerogative, profane his Sabbaths, call not upon his name, do his work negligently, not as they do their own; carry their hearts with them when they go into their shops and fields; leave them behind them when they go to his house and worship; fight against him with his own goodness; turn the edge of his kindness against him, not serving him with joyfulness and with gladness of heart in the abundance of all things, (but as much as in them lieth) make his power and providence, his bounty and care to serve with their iniquities; no wonder though on these terms, the holy God will not be at peace with them. *If thou dost will shalt not thou be accepted, Gen: 4: 7*: But these things are not well, they are not right, they are iniquity, there is no fairness, no equity in them: Wisdom and truth will not, cannot own them, *Mt: 23: 7*: O thou that art named Jacob, is the spirit of the Lord striven, are these his doings? no, no, let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous his thoughts, let him turn to the Lord. Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings, cease to do evil, learn to do well, seek judgement and God will refresh with you, *Isai: 1: 17, 18*:

It is true, there is not a just man upon earth that doeth good and sinneth not. The best at their best fall exceedingly short of that love and obedience which the Law in its perfection requireth: But yet the deliberate fixed desire and choice of their hearts; the settled bent of their endeavours is to be righteous,
Psal:

Psal. 109: 5, 30, 30 O that my wayes were directed to keep thy statutes. I have chosen the way of truth, thy judgments I have I laid before me, let my heart be found in thy statutes, *Psal. 139: 23, 24* Search me O God, and know my heart, try me and know my thoughts and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way ever-lasting. How earnestly doth Paul in his desires and end, avours reach after righteousness, *Phil. 3: 12, 13*: Not as though I were already perfect, But I follow after, reaching forth unto those things that are before.

Now as a Father pitieth his childe, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him, owneth them weak, but knoweth they are not wicked, reckoneth them according to the better (which is also the rising, prevailing) part, and will in time drive out the other, accepteth them according to what they would and can do. They having a glorious Advocate at his right hand, who maketh their welfare his business, *Rom: 8: 34*. Who is he that condemneth? it is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.

It is his work, he is alwayes at it, anticipating complaints, supplying defects, answering for, and rectifying what is amiss; so that as long as Jesus liveth, the peace of the righteous shall live also, *Eph: 2: 14*: He IS our peace. and as long as he IS, their peace will be. This man doeth the deed, *Mich: 5: 5*: He holdeth the Father and all the Saints together, so that nothing can separate them and the love of God, *Rom: 8: 39*. They are compleat in him, *Col. 2: 20*: so that being considered what Christ hath done, and will do for and in them, behold there is nothing wanting: but they are without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, *Glory to God in the Highest*.

2. Peace at home, inward contentment and quietness: This is an other fruit of righteousness, *Isai: 32: 17, 18*: and the effect of righteousness shall be quietness and assurance for ever: It is one of the woes of the wicked, to be like the troubled Sea, when it cannot rest, *Isai 57: 20* In the fulness of his sufficiency to be in straits, *Job 20: 22* So that though he knoweth not well what to desire more, yet he is not contented. It was wicked Haman's complaint, when he had told his Friends of the glory of his riches, and the multitude of his children, and all the things where the King had promoted him, *Ester 5: 13* yet all this availeth

me nothing. Whereas godliness in the vigorous lively exercise of it, leadeth the soul home to God the fountain of goodness, in whom there is enough of that which is adequate and very suitable: Hence cometh satisfaction, as with marrow and fatness, Godliness with contentment is great gain, *1 Tim. 6: 6*. The Lord shall satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fatthy bones and thou shalt be like a watered garden, *Isai. 58: 11*. But the rebellious dwell in a dry land, *Psal. 68: 6*. they fall short of God in Christ, who is all in all, and hence in the midst of all their havings, indeed possess nothing.

According to the method of the Gospel, *Grace prepareth the way to peace*, *Rom. 1: 7. 1 Cor. 1: 3*. *Grace be unto you, and peace*. No grace no true peace; not but that wicked men (while carnal contentments flow in upon them) may like *Bembaded* and his complices, *1 King. 20: 16* drink themselves drunk in their tents, and ruffle awhile: But it is not peace for all that, while Conscience is asleep, they may be secure to their cost: But God and an enlightened, awakened Conscience that speaketh after God, saith, *Peace only to the Righteous*. The truth is, when a wicked mans case is searched to the bottome, he will be found not to be at peace with himself, or on good terms with his own heart: To the wicked there is no peace, their own thoughts and hearts will fall out with them, accuse and condemn them, in that day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, *Rom. 2: 15, 16* Surely he shall not feel quietness in his belly, terrors are upon him, *Job 20: 20* But mark the perfect man, and behold him upright, the end of that man is peace, *Psal. 37: 37* It is God that justifieth him, who is he that condemneth. As soon therefore as the tumult is over, and the righteous man can hear what God saith, *Psal. 85: 8* his heart will be quiet, and there is one anointed to preach glad tidings to the meek, who will not fail in his trust, in whose hand it is to speak down all trouble, and create the fruit of the lips, peace, peace.

3 Outward prosperity, peace one with another, *Isai. 32: 17, 18* and the work of righteousness shall be peace, and my people shall dwell in a peaceable Habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places: Unrighteousness is the great trouble of Israel, and indeed the *Achan* of the world, *2 Chron. 15: 3, 4, 5* When Israel had forsaken the true God, there was no peace to him.

him that went out, nor to him that came in, but great vexations were upon all the Inhabitants of the countries, and Nation was destroyed of Nation, and City of City, for God did vex them with all adversity. If God will vex a people they shall be vexed. They therefore that vex his Holy Spirit, shall have trouble enough. He can create darkness and evil for them: but if a peoples way please the Lord, he maketh even their enemies to be at peace with them, *Prov. 16. 7.*

There are two happy effects of the rain mentioned, *Psal. 69. 9, 10.* It settleth the Earth, and enricheth the land, both these are eminently true of this spiritual rain, *Isai. 33. 6.* and wisdom and knowledge shall be the stability of thy times, and the fear of the Lord his treasure. O how would a soaking shower of righteousness settle our shaking times, repair our losses, and restore the years which the Caterpillars, the Sword, and the Mildew have taken from us. This would establish Sion, and make it a praise in the earth. We need not then fear our enemies, God would soon subdue them: this would also mend our peace one with another; Unrighteousness maketh a cry, *Isai. 5. 7.* He looked for judgement and behold oppression, for righteousness but behold a cry: the less righteousness the more complaining there will be in likelihood among us, and until we can obey the truth in doing right each to other, is it to be expected that contention will cease, *Rom. 2. 8.* To them that are contentious, and obey not the truth, indignation and wrath.

Ras. 2. Because it is Gods prerogative to help in this case, *Jer. 14. 22.* None of the gods of the Heathen can cause this rain, neither can the Heavens give it: Art not thou Hee O Lord our God, therefore we will wait on thee: *Job 37. 16.* Doeſt thou know the ballancings of the Clouds, the wondrous works of him which is perfect in knowledge. Godliness is a great mystery, *1 Tim. 3. 16* the foundation of it is laid in hidden wisdom, *1 Cor. 2. 7.* how great and costly a work is it to make a generation of sinners righteous. It is far easier to call in the treasures of the snow, dissolve the ice, and renew the face of the earth, then to make judgement dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness remain in the fruitful field. The difficulties which lye in the way of it, taken from the strength of the law, and divine revenging justice, the subtilty, power and rage of the Apostate Angels, the world
C lets

less, strengthless, dead estate in sins and trespasses, in which we all lie naturally, are even to amazement. Hence until infinite power set a work by free grace, influenced with the merit of the precious blood and obedience of the Son of God stepping in, it will not be done. A masse of miracles meet together in it. The blind is made to see, the deaf to hear, the leper is cleansed, and the dead quickened. *Eph: 2. 1, 2. & 1: 19, 20.* He that raised up the World out of nothing by the word of his power, must create it, or it will not be; you are his workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works, *Eph. 2. 10. Isai 45. 10.* It is in the day of Gods power that sinners are made willing to turn to Jesus Christ, *Psal. 110. 3.* and until that day cometh, *Paul, Apollos* and *Cephas* are nothing. Changes of men, and gifts avail not, *Jer. 7. 25.* *Since the day that your fathers came out of Egypt unto this day, I have sent unto you all my servants, the Prophets rising early and sending, yet they hearkened not unto me, nor inclined their ears.*

2. Mercies melt not; Let favour be shewed to the wicked, yet will he not learn righteousness: what could have been more in this way then was done to *Isaiah*, *Deut. 32. 15.* but he grew worse under all.

3. Corrections amend not *Jer. 5. 3.* *O Lord thou hast smitten them but they have not grieved, thou hast consumed them, but they have refused to receive correction, Dan 9. 13* all this is come upon us, but we have not made our Prayer before the Lord our God, that we might turn from our iniquities; their captivity was almost ended, but the work of righteousness and reformation needed to be begun.

3. Because the way which God in his wisdom and good pleasure hath appointed for us, to obtain his helping hand in this weighty case, is to seek him, *Mat 7. 7.* *Ask and have, seek and find, Zech 10. 1.* *Ask ye of the Lord rain in the time of the latter rain, so the Lord shall make bright Clouds, and give them showers of rain.* But he will be enquired of by the house of Israel to do this for them, *Ezek. 36. 37:*

1 Not that God needeth to be told our indigent state; no, he knoweth us quite thorow, and round about, *Psal 139. 1, 2, 4, 7.*

2 Or that he is slow to help: No, he is very pitiful, and of tender mercy, *James 5. 11.* ready to save, *Isai: 38. 20.*

3 Or

3 Or that we can merit any good by our seeking and striving, *Rom: 9: 16: It is not of him that willeth, or of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.*

4 But he is minded that we in the sence of our owne weaknes should acknowledge him in all our wayes, and be trained up in a constant dependance upon him, *Prov: 3: 5, 6.*

5 This honour also he is willing to put upon man, to imploy and improve him as far as may be in working out his own welfare *Phil: 2: 12, 13.*

The Use that we should make of what hath been said, is to Exhort, and Perswade us to take the counsel given in the Text, *Seek ye Jehovah until he come and rain righteousness upon us:* Till he make us a religious, godly, righteous people. That he would not only continu: but powerfully influence the means of grace, by his good spirit, for the turning of our hearts unto himself: that we may be a God-omnifying, Christ-admiring, Sin-hating, Self-denying, World-despising People.

That the Vine brought from far and planted here, may still retain its ancient Nobility: even the same Spirit of Holiness which came after God into this Wilderness when it was a land not sown. That we lose not our first love, our first heavenly-mindedness, our first purity, our first peaceableness, humility and seriousness; but may grow up in godliness and honesty as those to whom the Gospel hath come, not in word only, but in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance: That we may not only name the name of Jesus, but depart from all iniquity, and converse as becometh the Gospel. The Lord God of our Fathers even the God of all grace say so too: Seek him, O seek him, that it may be thus: To perswade to this,

x Consider whether it be not time to seek him on this account; this argument is urged by the Prophet in the Text: doth not the season call aloud? what think you, is it not time to ask this rain of God?

(1) Is not the old generation almost gone? when the old stock is up at, unless God visit the Earth and water it, sending a fresh supply, there is no living: what a critical day was it with Israel of old, when Joshua and the Elders that out-lived Joshua and all that Generation, which had seen all the great works of the Lord, were gathered unto their Fathers, *Judges 2. 7, 10: and*

[*This rain failing*] there arose another generation that knew not Jehovah, and then how soon did their prosperity and welfare fail also. They did evil in the sight of the Lord, and they forsook the Lord God of their Fathers, and the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel, Mich. 7. 1. *Woe is me, for I am as when they have gathered the Summer fruits, as the grape gleanings of the vintage, there is no cluster, the good man is perished* : Time was, that good men grew in this land by clusters, but now how thin : *Lord visit the Earth, and water it.*

2. Doth not our ~~Land~~ Land mourn for the want of this ? how long shall the land mourn, and the herbs of every field wither for the wickedness of them that dwell therein, *Jer. 12. 2.* How long shall we be smitten with Sickness, Drought, Caterpillars, Blasting and Sword. How many Villages are already forsaken of their Inhabitants, their High wayes unoccupied ? how many chosen young men are fallen upon the high places of the field ? how many Widows left solitary among us, with their tears on their cheeks ? how many mothers in Israel, weeping for their children, and refuse to be comforted ? because they are not : shall the sword devour for ever, shall it not suffice ? Is it not time therefore to seek righteousness, that desolation and spoil may come to an end.

3. Hath not a great deal of cost and precious pains been laid out upon us, that we might (if possible) be righteous ? When the principal Wheat is cast into the Earth, and Seed-time over, Rain will soon be needed, and if it come not, the Husband-man looketh out earnestly ; for alas, all is gone if God send not rain. We have been instantly preached to for a long time : eminent favour also hath been shewed us ; what a long day of bounty and patience have we enjoyed. At sundry times also, and in divers manners we have been afflicted, especially in later years : now shall all this be in vain ? truly, if there come no rain, if God send not his spirit to water, word and Providences all will be lost. And if we be preached to, but without profit, favoured but not taught righteousness, chastened but not amended, what shall we do in the end thereof ?

If a man seetheth at a high Rent, and hath no increase, but his crop faileth him year after year, he breaketh at the last : truly unless the rain cometh, and righteousness springeth up in the wilderness, considering at what a Rent we ser, we cannot expect to hold so long : to be barren under so much bounty, uncultivall notwithstanding

standing so many corrections and fatherly chastisements: To have so many Sabbaths, Counsels, Instructions, Warnings, the labour and lives of so many of Gods precious servants to answer for, will surely sink us at last, *Isai. 54, 5. therefore when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes, and now go to, I will tell you what I will do to my Vineyard, I will take away the Hedges thereof, and it shall be eaten up?*

2. Consider your selves who you are, and of what consequence it is, that righteousness be rained down on you;]

Have you not *Abraham* to your Father? are you not the offspring of the righteous, and will you degenerate into a strange plant? dare you continue wicked? will you not be like your Fathers? It is noted of *Nabal*, 1 Sam 25. 3. that he was churlish, and evil in his doings, and he was of the house of *Caleb*. Alas, alas, of the house of *Caleb*; he was a man of another, of an excellent spirit; what a fool and of the house of *Caleb*; a son of Belial and of the house of *Caleb*; Oh that such a branch should spring out of such a Stock: Shall the faithful City become an Harlot, it was full of judgement, righteousness lodged in it, now Murderers, *Isai. 21.*

It was an aggravation of their sin, *Judg. 2. 17.* that they turned quickly out of the way which their fathers walked in, obeying the commandments of the Lord; but they did not SO; your Fathers were a humble, holy, obedient people, and will not you be SO: your Fathers did Justice and Judgement, and will not you do SO: Your Fathers walked with God, kept their seasons of retirement to their closets, to pray and seek God, do you do SO? your Fathers called the Sabbath honourable, the Holy of the Lord, and were conscientiously careful not to do their own wayes, nor finde their own pleasure, nor speak their own words, are you for any manner of talk when the Sabbath is come? do you say, what a weariness is it? and account it the burthen of the Lord of Hosts, did your Fathers do SO? were the Sabbaths wonted to be spent in the houses where you dwell as you spend them? Shall the holy example of those that have beaten the way to Sion before you, be of no account in your eyes, in a Land of uprightness; will you deal unjustly and not behold the Majesty of the Lord, *Isai. 26: 10*: Verily, we had need to seek the Lord till he come and rain righteousness on us, That when he shall look into our houses, we may

may not say, what have I here? *Iſai. 52. 5.* Is this the house of such a precious godly man? are these his children? is this the Nation that I gathered out of the midst of a Nation, with a mighty hand, and a stretched out arm? Is this the people for whose sake I rebuked the Heathen, saying, (when they were few in number, and strangers in the land) *Touch not mine Anointed, do my Prophets no harm.* Were they a proud, idle, intemperate, unmerciful Generation of men, were not their faces set for Heaven, their language the language of Canaan? was not holiness to the Lord written on their wayes? and will you be worldly and prophane, drink and swear, riot and be wanton, deride Religion; scoffe at the wayes or servants of God: O take heed, take heed, lest the names you bear, the houses you dwell in, the estates you inherit, the places you sustain, rise up in judgement against you, and increase your condemnation at the last.

Believe it first; tis a dangerous, a very dangerous thing to forsake the wayes of truth and holiness, when sweetned, and in a manner naturallized, by the practise and example of godly Patents, *2 Chron. 21. 12* and there came a writing to Jehoram from *Elijah the Prophet*, saying, *Thus saith the Lord God of David thy Father, because thou hast not walked in the wayes of Iehosaphat thy Father, nor in the wayes of Asa King of Judah, &c. Behold with a great Plague will the Lord smite thy People, and thy Children, and thy Wives, and all thy Goods; and thou shalt have great sicknesses by diseases of thy bowels, until thy bowels fall out, by reason of the sicknesses day by day.*

3. If God rain not righteousness on you, it may be expected that he will rain something else: Seek this gentle rain, that the storm of his wrath fall not on you, *Psal. 11.* Upon the wicked he shall rain Snakes, Fire, Brimstone, and an horrible tempest, this shall be the portion of their cup.

4. Weigh the advantage that cometh by righteousness, that is much every way; *Godliness is profitable for all, 1 Tim 4. 8.* having the promises of this life, and that which is to come: it will stand you instead while you live, when you dye, and to eternitie.

(1.) While you live, *1 Pet. 1. 3.* First seek the Kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added: If God give you righteousness he will give you all, *Rom. 8. 32. Psal. 37. 27.* Depart from evil and do good, and dwell for ever more, i.e. live

live as long as life is good, God doth not grudge, but delight in the prosperity of the righteous, *Psal. 35. 27.*

(2.) When ye dye; *the sting of death is sin*, when that is out there is no danger. Hence Righteousness delivereth from death, the death of the righteous is scarce worthy the name of Death, *Psal. 22. 26.* they shall praise the Lord that seek him, your heart shall live for ever. Death (though an enemy to nature) shall thorough grace in Jesus Christ do them no harm, but further their good and welfare, lifting them home to their Fathers house, where there is fulness of joy and pleasure for evermore, *Rev. 14. 13.* *Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, that they may rest from their labours and their work follow them.*

(3.) Righteousness is profitable to eternity, *Mat. 25. 46.* *These shall go into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal:* God will never a done shewing kindness to the godly man.

How many are the good wayes and the comfortable words which he hath spoken concerning such.

1. He loveth them dearly, and that the world shall know before all be done, *Iob. 17. 23.* *That the world may know that thou hast loved them as thou hast loved me:* he loveth to see their faces and hear their voice, *Gen. 2. 14.* when he speaketh of righteous Noah, how doth he repeat his Name over and over, as if it were sweet to him, and he loved to have it in his mouth, *Gen. 6. 8, 9.* *Noah was a just man and perfect in his generation, and Noah walked with God, and Noah, &c.* why might not once naming of Noah have served thorough that short discourse, but to declare that his name is sweet. *Noah, Noah, O Noah, I love Noah, Noah* is a godly man, a good, holy man: God hath set apart him that is godly for himself, *Psal. 4. 3.* when he maketh up his Jewels men shall return and see a difference, *Mal. 3. 17, 18.*

2. God will bless them greatly, *Psal. 5. 12* *For thou Lord wilt bless the righteous with favour, wilt thou compass him as with a shield.*

1. He will take care of their persons, *Psal. 121. 7, 8.* *The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil, he shall preserve thy soul, the Lord shall preserve thy going out, and thy coming in, from this time forth and even for evermore.*

2. He will bless their substance: *The curse of the Lord is in the house.*

house of the wicked, but he blesteth the habitation of the just, Prov. 3. 33. A little that a righteous man hath is better than the riches of many wicked, Psal. 37. 16.

3. He will not forget their names, Psal. 112. 6. The righteous shall be had in everlasting remembrance.

4. He will show kindness to their relations also, Psal. 128. 2, 3, 4. Blessed is every one that feareth the Lord, it shall be well with thee, thy wife shall be as a fruit; ul mine, thy children like olive plants: the seed of the righteous shall be delivered, Prov. 11. 21. The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting, upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto childrens children.

5. He will shine on their endeavours, Psal. 1. 3. All that he doth shall prosper, but one sinner destroyed much good: wicked Abah having a share in Iehosaphats ships spoiled the voyage, 1 King 22. 48, 49.

6. He will make them blessings, Gen. 12. 2. I will bless thee and thou shalt be a blessing. If you be righteous many shall be the better for you: your counsel, your company, your example will now be all precious; your tongues shall be as choice silver, and your lips feed many, Prov. 10. 20, 21. your prayers will avail very much, Jam. 5. 16. your fellowship will now be desirable; a godly man is a companion for a Prince, Psal. 119. 63. I am (saith King David) a companion of all them that fear thee, and of them that keep thy precepts, and good reason, for their fellowship is with the Father and the Son, 1 Joh. 1. 3. He withdraweth not his eyes from the righteous, but with Kings are they on the throne, Job 36. 7. moreover righteousness will advantage you for places and employment of trust, Neh 7. 2. I gave my Brother Hanani charge over Jerusalem, for he was a faithful man, and feared God above many. The integrity of Davids heart did greatly meliorate the skillfulness of his hand, and was the main thing in Gods eye, when he took him from the sheep-folds to be King in Israel, 1 Sam 16. 7. In a word, the only true foundation of universal blessedness is laid in righteousness, Prov. 10. 25. As the whirlwind passeth, so is the wicked to move, but the righteous is an everlasting foundation.

5 Consider the sweet and inviting terms on which God standeth with us in this matter, Mat. 7. 7. Ask and have, Jam 1. 5. If any man lack wisdom, let him ask it of God, who giveth liberally to

to all, and it shall be given him, *Luk. 11. 13.* How much more shall your heavenly Father give his Holy Spirit to those that ask.

Quest. But how may we so seek God as to find him, and a supply of righteousness from him?

Ans. 1. Seek him heartily and sincerely, *Isai. 26. 9.* With my soul have I desired thee in the night season, with my spirit within me will I seek thee, *Jer. 29. 3.* And ye shall seek me and find me, when you shall search for me withal your heart. God will not be mocked in any case, much less in this which is of such high importance. It was Israel's folly of old, *Psal. 78. 36. 37.* when he slew them thou they sought him, they enquired early after God, nevertheless they did flatter him with their mouth: they lied unto him with their tongues: take we heed lest we fail here. It is time to make righteousness our design, to Preach for this, Pray for this, Hear for this sincerely, heartily; lest while in shew we seek this, but with our hearts go after other things, we lose this and other things too, *Mat. 6. 33.* Blessed are those that hunger and thirst after righteousness: for such will be beyond complement, and seek in truth.

2. Seek seasonably, early, speedily, *2 Cor. 6. 1.* Behold now is the accepted time, behold now is the day of salvation; so day if you will hear his voice harden not your hearts. Lose not your day, while God calleth, while his spirit moveth, while life lasteth, while you have liberty, means, helps and advantages about you, before the decree come forth, seek righteousness lest the Clouds return after rain; lest your Sabbaths be again turned into days of labour, and weariness, hazard and hardship: lest instead of the voice of the Turtle, you have the noise of War, lest you come too late to be accepted, *Numb. 14. 6, 7.* The Spirit of God strove earnestly by Joshua and Caleb, to persuade Israel to go forward, but in vain, for in their frowardness and fit, they set up their spirits, and would not hearken.

Wherefore in the 28. and 29. verses, God giveth forth his decree, As truly as I live, saith the Lord, as ye have spoken in mine ears, so will I do to you, your carcases shall fall in the wilderness: after this they changed their mind, *ver. 39. 40.* The People mourned greatly, and they rose up early in the morning, and gat them up into the top of the mountain, saying, Lo we be here, and we will go up unto the place which the Lord hath promised: but their motion

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take not. Though they rose early, though they mourned, and went up to the mountain.

Obj. But hath not God said that those that seek him early shall find him, Prov. 8. 17.

1. True: but mansearly is many times Gods late, Prov. 1. 28 *Because I have called, and ye refused, I have stretched out my hand and no man regarded, but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity, they shall seek me early but they shall not find me.*

3. Seek him earnestly: Seek first the kingdome of God and his righteousness, with that intention and height of desires, which becometh the worth, excellency and necessity of the thing sought. Righteousness is the principal thing life is in it: win it and you win all, miss it and all is lost; O therefore seek importunately, not only with your hearts sincerely, but with al your hearts strongly. Warm your spirits with the consideration forementioned, realize them, mix them with faith, meditate much on them, that you may be suitably raised in your desires and endeavors after righteousness.

4. Seek him humbly, with a heart broken down and abased in the sense of sin and misery, weakness and unworthiness. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart he will not despise, Psal. 51. 17. *He forgetteth not the cry of the humble,* Psal. 9. 12. but until our fallow ground be broken up, it will not be Gods time, to come and rain righteousness upon us. It becometh us therefore, to remember the Wormwood and the Gall, and to have our souls humbled within us: to sit alone and put our mouths in the dust, if there may be hope for us, accepting the punishment of our iniquity: for our destruction is of our selves, our own sword hath devoured our children: we have procured these things unto our selves; but our help is not in our own hand. Be it that eternal salvation, the welfare of our whole man, the preservation of the land, our lives, our little ones, our peace, our liberty, all good depend upon our unfained turning to God in Christ, and being righteous; yet this is wholly beyond our power, we have no might for it, Turn thou me, Jer. 31. 18. herein appeareth the ~~retchedness~~ *retchedness* of a natural man. Should God pass by all former provocations, and say to him, do but this one thing and all shall be well, love the fountain of goodness

nels, who is also thy life: although nothing can be more rational than this, yet he is unto nothing more impotent and averse, *Rom. 8.7. The carnal mind is enmity unto God, is not subject nor can it be.*

Moreover we cannot deserve that God should turn us, we are ungodly and enemies as well as without strength, *Rom. 5. 6, 10.* If therefore after many other judgements which have come upon us for our sins, God should now give us up to a blind mind, and a hard heart, fill us with our own devices, leave us to a reprobate sense, make the heavens over us to be brass, command the clouds that they rain not on us, withhold his free spirit, send a dry wind not to fan, nor to purge, but to blast all means, making his word and ordinances, changes of mercy and affliction to be a savour of death unto death. He would be righteous, tis true, without righteousness we perish. It is as true that nothing but infinite grace, working without, yet against deserts of ours can make us righteous. When therefore we pray for righteousness, we may well take *Dauids* words, *Psal. 9 1. Have mercy upon us O God of our righteousness, and bear our prayer.*

5. Seek him believingly, with a holy dependance upon the mercy, power, truth and faithfulness of God in Jesus Christ. Remember *James* His BLET, *Jam. 1. 6. But let him ask in Faith.*

(1.) Our sins are indeed many, and our iniquities very great but there is merit enough in the blood of Jesus to redeem them from all, *1 Job. 1. 7.*

(2.) Though all means are of themselves, weak, and utterly insufficient to subdue our corrupt and rebellious wills, yet with the Lord Jehovah there is everlasting strength; if he will he can convince, enlighten, humble, persuade, sanctifie, quicken and enlarge uncontroaleably, when he will work none can let. It is nothing with him to save, *2 Chron. 14. 11.*

(3) You have the countenance of Gods command to encourage in going to him for righteousness: so the Text before us: thus *Zeph. 2. 2. Seek righteousness, Mat. 6. 33.* now let us improve this word, not only to awe conscience, but to strengthen and animate faith, *Mark 10. 49. Be of good comfort, arise, he calleth thee.*

(4.) You have the shadow of the promise to sit in and wait *Luk 11 13.* how much more will he give his Spirit to them that ask him

(5.) Consider the example of poor needy sinners that have gone before you: what happy welcome found *Ephraim*, Jer. 31. 19. surely I have heard *Ephraim* bemoaning himself thus, *Thou hast chastised me and I was chastised, turn thou me and I shall be turned, Is Ephraim my dear childe?* It is unto God a most acceptable request, to ask of him the rain of righteousness: He had rather we should seek him for the meat which endureth to eternal life than for that which perisheth.

Let it be to him for a name and a praise for ever. Oh the depth of the riches of the wisdom and love of God, who knowing our frame, and how eager we are, in our pursuit of inferior things, maketh a bait of them, wherewith to draw us to him for such as are infinitely better, *even his Kingdom and Righteousness*, *Mat. 6. 33.*

6. Seek him unanimously: The stress lieth here, therefore lift together. We in *New-England* are a poor and an afflicted people: It is not for us, to rejoice with other Nations in our number or our strength; but that mattereth not, if God be with us we shall do well enough, notwithstanding our poverty, our littleness, and mean outward estate. Past experience proclaimeth it, that our hazard lieth not in these things. If the mutation of Rocks be our defence we are safe: Can we desire greater serenity peace, and safety, then we have enjoyed in years past. *Yekozab* firm is not shortned, there is no shadow of turning with him. If we be righteous he will love us, and we shall dwell safely by his side. If any thing undoe us it will be sin, our unrighteousness, our want of the fear of God, our want of love to Jesus Christ, our forsaking the fountain of living waters, our unquiet and provoking carriage to the Angel that leadeth us by the way: but if righteousness be rained on us all will be well. It is enough, O therefore let every one put in for that with all the strength he can make.

7. Fathers, Ancient Christians, yee have been at the beginning of the work of God in this Country, and you are greatly concerned in the progress of it: lose not the things ye have wrought, for which ye have prayed, and wept, and travel'd, and ventured so much: you have in some measure experienced the worth of Righteousness, labour as for life that it may live when you are dead: your Glass is even out, you are almost at home, strengthen

Strengthen the feeble knees, brighten your example, shine in the fear of God; let not your sun go down in a cloud, your prayers avail very much, O speak yet again unto God for this poor land in which you sojourn, lest he bring evil upon it by slaying your Sons.

2. Young men, ye are strong, let not sin overcome you; consider the price that is in your hands; Religion privileged as sometimes it hath been, and thorough grace still is in this Land, is a costly Legacy, take heed you do not forfeit it: let not the fear of God dye as long as you live: Shall it be said in time to come, that godliness dwelt in the land until you arose, but then failed: shall this ruine be under your hand; *O seek the Lord till he come and rain righteousness on you.*

3. Ye Masters of Families, will not you and your houses serve the Lord? surely it is time for you to seek him also: The foundation of all societies is laid in families; you therefore who are Leaders in them, and have the first seasoning of young ones had need look to your selves. If the Foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do? If the Springs be corrupt what will the Streams be: consider the great trust which God hath committed to you, and command your children and Household after you to keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgement, that the Lord may bring upon them that which he hath spoken of the righteous: see that your example be good, that those who come after you, and tread in your steps may walk safely. Let not your vain conversation be a stumbling-block in the way to Heaven, least your children rise up and call you cursed at the last, for the irreligion and profaneness which you have taught them.

4. Ye house of Aaron, this matter belongeth in a special manner unto you; Ye are the Lords Ministers, O weep betwixt the Porch and the Altar, and say, *Rain down Righteousness on thy People Lord; and give not thine Heritage to reproach; whereby should the Heathen say, where is their God?*

It is your Office to teach Jacob Gods Judgements, and Israel his Law: Take heed therefore to the Ministry which ye have received in the Lord that ye fulfil it. Preach Righteousness to your Congregations, plainly declare and powerfully press that Grace of God which bringeth Salvation: Mark it your work to watch for Souls, as those that must give an account:

Be instant in season and out of season, reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and doctrine. Scke your Sermons in prayer, print them in your practise and conversation. Follow the example of the Baptist, who was *the voice of one crying in the wilderness*, Joh. 1. 23. (all voice) his word and his works, his language and his life spake this, *make strait the way of the Lord, so ye, and do likewise.*

5. Ye also who are Judges in the Land, the Lord make you higher then the rest of the people from the shoulders and upward in wisdom and holiness: the Lord give you an open mouth for righteousness, *Prov. 31.8,9.* Let your eyes be upon the righteous in the Land to encourage them, promote Religion, bear up against sin, suppress iniquity; put life into your wholesome Laws by vigorous execution; thus do in the fear of the Lord faithfully, and with a perfect heart. Be it that the Battell is against you before and behind, yet be of good courage and play the men for your people, and for the Cities of our God, and the Lord do what seemeth him good.

7. Seek him perseveringly, minde the language of the Text *Seek the Lord (until) he come*; then shall we know if ye follow on to know the Lord, *Hos. 6. 2.* pray alwayes with this prayer, and do not faint, *Luk. 12. 1.* ye therefore which make mention of the name of the Lord, give him no rest till he raine down righteousness on the land.

To Conclude, Seek God by all means, in all his own wayes:

1. Maintain a high esteem of the Word and Ordinances of God: woe be to you if your souls loathe the Mantle, or call it a light food

2. Take heed you be not overcharged with the love of the world, and the cares of this life, these ~~choke~~ the Word. Be cloathed with the Sun, and let the Moon be under your feet.

3. Study the method of conversion held forth in the Word and fall in with the good spirit of God breathing in the same, to the wonderment of men and Angels, life and immortality are come to light, thorough the Gospel. There is a sure way to save sinners opened thorough Jesus Christ: admire it, study it, labour to know it: set your hearts to it, and follow it: let wisdom enter, and understanding be pleasant: love the light, but on a humble teachable frame of spirit, entertain conviction kindly: Be content

content to know the worst of sin, look upon it in that peculiar, direct opposition in which it standeth to the wisdom and goodness, authority and holiness of God in the command: see it in its sad effects; the end of these things is death. Behold it thorough the bloody glass of Christs sufferings; look on it from a death-bed, and as it will look on you at the last. Give that honour to God, to believe that he hath good reason for all that he hath said against sin in his word, concluding that at length sin will prove to be as he hath spoken, and if God and you can be of one mind about sin, the great difficulty is over. Fall in love with Jesus Christ, let him have a name in your hearts above every name that is named in this world or that which is to come, *Cant. 5. 10, 16.* Hate all the pleasures of sin, let all external priviledges, personal performances, and worldly employments, be dung and dross in comparison of winning him, and being found of God in him. Do duty with conscientious care and diligence, but say not to the works of your own hands, *Ye are our Gods.* Go not about to establish a righteousness of your own, but submit your selves to the righteousness of God. *Abraham* found by experience that the Hand-maid taken into *Sarabs* place brought with her great vexation, inasmuch that at length he was put upon it to cast her and her Son quite out of doors.

But least I be tedious let me shut up all with this word :

Be not discouraged: *To the Lord belongeth righteousness and salvation, although to us confusion of face.* The residue of the spirit is with him, who knoweth but he may return and make his work appear to his servants, and his glory to their children? *Jerusalem* was greatly fallen, *Isai. 1. 21.* when of a faithful City she was become a Harlot, and from being full of righteousness and judgement to be full of Murderers: But God lifted her up again, *Jer. 31. 23.* Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel, as yet they shall use this speech in the land of Judah, and in the Cities thereof, *The Lord bless thee O habitation of justice, and mountain of holiness.* He can strengthen the things that remain, which are ready to dye.

There was a time mentioned, *Mark 9. 14, 15.* in which Christ being withdrawn to the mount, his Disciples were hard put to it below. The poor man brought to them his Son which had a dumb Spirit, but they could not cast him out, at length Jesus came

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came down, took to himself his mighty power, rebuked the foul Spirit, healed the Cripple, comforted the Father, and sent the multitude away amazed, and doing as all the things which he did. Truly we have been sinners, to experience the naughtiness of our own hearts, how bent we are to backslide and go off from God, as the angels and utter insufficiency of all means in themselves, enabled to keep us with God, or reduce us to him when we have fallen. But it may be Christ will shortly come down, and then we shall be healed, *Jer. 17-14. Saye it. O Lord and we shall be healed, and we shall be healed, for thou art our prayer.* Iustus sevit him therefore till he come, for he loveth Righteousness, and hath not forsaken them that seek him.

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